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AUTHOR Anzai, Yayoi; And Others
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ABSTRACT

To explore the portrayals of Americans in Japanese television commercials and Japanese in American television commercials, and how those portrayals are perceived by each nationality, a two-part study examined 745 American commercials and 956 Japanese commercials. Researchers first coded the number of American males and females who appeared in the Japanese commercials, and the number of Japanese males and females who appeared in the American commercials. The characters were then coded for major or minor roles, whether they were models or shown in leisure or work related settings, and whether the commercial was sponsored by an American or a Japanese company. Results showed that American males, who were most often middle aged and in a major role, appeared far more frequently in Japanese commercials (297 males) than did Japanese men in American commercials (44 males). American females appeared far more frequently as well, with a total of 212 American females versus 13 Japanese females in American commercials. Americans were most often portrayed in major roles enjoying leisure activities, and were frequently associated with food products, while Japanese most often had background roles and were associated with work activities, such as selling cars or car parts. Results also showed that both American and Japanese audiences rated American characters higher than Japanese characters, with American audiences giving American characters the highest ratings. Because television representation can affect viewers' attitudes and behavior, it is hoped that the findings of this study will contribute to better understanding between the United States and Japan. Extensive tables are included. (JC)

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MUTUAL IMAGES:

AMERICANS AND JAPANESE IN TV COMMERCIALS

by

Yayoi Anzai
Program in Communication Studies
University of California
Santa Barbara, California 93106

Juliet Lushbough Dee
Department of Communication
University of Delaware
Newark, Delaware 19716

Federico Subervi
Program in Communication Studies
University of California
Santa Barbara, California 93106

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MUTUAL IMAGES: AMERICANS AND JAPANESE IN TV COMMERCIALS

This study attempts to explore the portrayals of Americans in Japanese television commercials and those of Japanese in American television commercials. The purpose of this study is 1) to determine the demographic and other significant characteristics of these portrayals with a content analysis, and 2) to identify audience impressions of these characters with a multivariate analysis of raters' responses on a semantic differential scale. It is important to do a study of this nature because how characters are portrayed on television and the audience impressions may greatly affect not only the audience's conceptual world, but their behavior. This content analysis will provide the data which will facilitate the study of the effects, if any, of these television portrayals on the American and Japanese audiences.

Among the mass media, television is the most pervasive both in American and Japanese society. In the average American and Japanese families, adults watch nearly three hours a day (7, 36). Also, 49% of the Japanese public says that television is their major source of information (29). When these data are compared with the findings that 33% of the Japanese depend on newspapers and only 4% of them depend on radio as their primary source of information, the significance of television in their lives becomes evident. Signorelli summarizes the influence of television on American life when she states that "television dominates the symbolic environment of modern life and provides a 'mainstream' view of beliefs and behaviors" (33, p. 99).

In television there is what Gerbner has called a "synthetic world" which is defined by symbolic composition and structure of the message system of a mass medium (11). The synthetic world generally deviates from reality by emphasizing some aspects and ignoring some other aspects of reality (11). Like American television, Japanese television would have its own "synthetic world."

American characters in Japanese television are part of a Japanese viewer's synthetic world. Likewise, Japanese characters in American television are a part of an American's synthetic world. One result of the synthetic world is that characters are often stereotyped.

Both American and Japanese researchers have suggested that one advertisers identify what the audeince will accept, they will repeatedly use similar content, including stereotypes (21, 28). Ward, Levinson and Wackman concluded that children are interested in commercials themselves, and not just product information (39). Whether children or adults are consciously interested in commercials or not, they may be affected by them.

A number of researchers have concluded that both children and adults may change their attitudes toward members of a different race because of a certain television program (2, 17, 18, 34). Other researchers have shown that characters playing stereotyped roles serve as role models for children (30, 23, 1).

In addition to the problem of stereotyped characters, there is the larger problem of whether Asians and other minorities are visible at all on television, either in the commercials or in the regular programs. For example, in both television drama and commercials, the representation of blacks slowly increased from 1969 to 1977, but then dropped in 1978 (16, p. 12). But minorities other than blacks have been virtually excluded from television commercials (32), and Asian images are more rare in commercials than in television programs (20). Gerbner and Signorielli found that the frequency of Asians with major roles peaked in 1973-75 (2.6%), and began a steady decline (0.9% in 1975-76; 0.6% in 1976) from 1975 on (cited in 20). Because Asian characters were barely visible in television drama, it is not possible to generalize about Japanese characters in TV drama, and their proportion in TV commercials should be even smaller (20). Japanese characters in American television commercials would be so rare that they would be stereotypically represented. Iiyama and Kitano have found that 1) Asian characters often appear

as a group rather than individuals, engaging in the same activity or occupation, and 2) Asian characters usually advertise the products that are representative of the stereotypes (20).

One factor which may affect the portrayal of Japanese in American TV commercials is the fact that the Federal Trade Commission has encouraged comparative advertisements so that they are theoretically more useful to consumers than commercials sans comparisons. In contrast, comparisons naming products are prohibited in Japan (31). If Japanese characters appear in a comparative advertisement which is sponsored by an American machinery company, Japanese may appear as competitors. This might affect the American audience's feelings toward the Japanese, especially in view of the present trade friction between the two countries.

Gerbner et al. maintain that television is used by many of us to test reality; thus, the stereotyped portrayals become real, and behavior in real life is guided by expectations derived from the stereotypes (13). Americans and Japanese are different races with different cultural backgrounds. The images they have of each other would play an important role in their relationships until they communicate with each other as individuals rather than as "an American" and "a Japanese."

To determine whether Americans and Japanese are stereotyped in each other's television commercials, this study begins with a content analysis centered on the question "What are the demographic and other significant characteristics of American characters in Japanese television commercials and Japanese characters in American television commercials?" The variables considered in this study are 1) character sex, 2) character age, 3) role significance, 4) context, and 5) the type of product advertised.

The second part of this study deals with how the audience perceives American and Japanese characters in television commercials. A Forum for Children's Television report in Japan explains that the purpose of using foreign characters in Japanese commercials is to

lend prestigious images to the products advertised (10). Instead of selling products directly, Japanese advertisements attempt to create short dramas in which foreign characters play roles to increase a product's prestige or credibility. Snob appeal is thus used to sell luxury items such as liquor, and American characters cast to sell these items appear to have a high socio-intellectual status in Japanese commercials.

This leads to our first hypothesis: American and Japanese audiences perceive that American characters in Japanese television commercials appear to have a higher socio-intellectual status than Japanese characters in American television commercials.

Idols appear in 49.5% of all Japanese commercials, and 9% of them are foreign characters (10). Examples include Peter Fonda, Roger Moore and Tatum O'Neal. In contrast, Japanese are perceived only as a small minority group by most Americans. Hur observes that "despite the increasing research interest in minority audiences in recent years, specific Oriental populations have been either neglected or not included, and thus hidden, among general cross sections of populations used as subjects in previous research" (19, p. 35). His statement reflects the American mass media's attitudes toward Asians in general. When Asians do appear on TV, they are stereotyped. Although these stereotypes have varied depending on the political and economic context of the times, "the basic message is that Asians are inferior to white Americans and the only way to become accepted by white society is for Asians to become passive, dependent and respectful" (20, p. 162).

This leads to our second hypothesis: American and Japanese audiences perceive that American characters in Japanese television commercials appear to be more attractive than Japanese characters in American television commercials.

To test audience impressions in terms of socio-intellectual status and attractiveness, the principal independent variable is television character nationality: that is, American characters in Japanese TV commercials and Japanese characters in American TV

commercials. In addition, two independent variables are included: raters' nationalities and sponsoring countries for the commercials. Rater nationality might be an important source of variance because of cultural differences between the two countries. American and Japanese raters might get very different impressions of the characters. Likewise, sponsoring countries for the television commercials might also be an important source of variance, especially on American television, which includes comparative commercials. For example, the audience might receive different impressions of Japanese characters in American television commercials depending on whether the commercials are sponsored by American or by Japanese companies.

The dependent variable was the audience impressions of the TV characters as measured by the semantic differential in terms of socio-intellectual status and attractiveness.

Pilot Study

Prior to the present study, pilot studies were conducted in spring 1982 and in winter 1983. The general purpose was to test the reliability of the coding instrument, specifically to 1) establish categories and 2) establish the definitions of the categories. For this purpose, American and Japanese television commercials were assembled. American TV commercials were recorded by Ms. Anzai and four members of the faculty and staff at the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB).[1] Japanese television commercials were recorded during the weeks of 6-11 p.m. in February and September 1982. These sample television commercials were coded separately by two bilingual coders to provide double-coded data for a reliability check. After various statistical operations were performed, the methods used in the pilot studies were reviewed and some modifications were made on the categories and definitions.

Sample of Television Commercials Selected

American television commercials were recorded from 6-11 p.m. during a sample week of October 13-19, 1982. Japanese television commercials were recorded during the same hours, from 6-11 p.m. during the week of September 5-11, 1982.

American characters in Japanese commercials were distinguished from other nationalities such as Europeans by their verbal and nonverbal behavior and by the background scenery. These variables were also used to distinguish Japanese from other Asians in American commercials.

American characters in Japanese commercials were selected on the basis of "representativeness." Representativeness was based on 1) frequency of the character's appearance, 2) sex and age composition of the samples as a whole, and 3) character role. After repeated discussions between a Japanese graduate student and Ms. Anzai, five Japanese television commercials which portrayed American characters were selected.

The sample of Japanese characters in American commercials was also selected on the basis of representativeness. Of the seven American commercials, two were eliminated because 1) one of them represented a Japanese character in almost exactly the same manner by the same sponsor, and 2) the other television commercial used a still picture throughout.

The details of the samples are presented in Tables 1 and 2. These selected samples of Japanese and American commercials were dubbed onto a master tape in order of alternating nationality of the commercials.

The design of this study was originally a 2 X 2 X 2 MANOVA, which consisted of two character nationalities (United States and Japan), two raters' nationalities (American and Japanese), and two sponsoring countries for the commercials. Because there was only one American commercial sponsored by a Japanese company during this sample week, however, this last construct raised a question of generalizability. Thus, the design of the study was modified to a 2 X 2 MANOVA: two character nationalities and two rater nationalities.

Inter-coder Reliability

All commercials in the sample were coded separately by two trained bilingual graduate students at UCSB. The coders thus provided double-coded data. After all coding was conducted, the data were checked for agreement. Whenever disagreement was found, a third coder coded the commercial. In this way, the data yielded one data set with agreement by at least two coders. The coding sheet and definitions of categories were based on those determined in the pilot studies.

The acceptable level of inter-coder reliability was set at 90%. Inter-coder agreement ranged from 91.2% (for age of characters) to 99.5% (for advertised products).

Comparison of American and Japanese Characters in Commercials

The total number of Japanese television commercials covered in this study was 956; there were 508 American characters who appeared in 191 (20%) of the 956 commercials.

The total number of American television commercials covered was 745; there were 57 Japanese characters who appeared in 26 (3.5%) commercials.

The chi-square test was applied to test the difference in frequency of characters' appearances in the two countries' commercials. With df = 1, a value of 102.15 was obtained, with a probability of less than 0.001.[2] This indicates a significant imbalance in the proportion of the two types of portrayals in American and Japanese commercials.

As Table 3 indicates, the American characters comprised 279 males (54.9%), 212 females (41.7%), and 17 characters (3.4%) who appeared too briefly for coders to identify their sex. The Japanese characters consisted of 44 males (77.2%) and 13 females (22.8%). There were no Japanese characters for whom sex could not be identified. Thus, male characters appeared more frequently than female characters in both countries. This discrepancy was greater for Japanese characters in American television commercials.

The chi-square test indicated a significant difference in the sex composition of American and Japanese characters (with df = 1 and $X = 8.05$, $p < 0.005$).

Table 4 shows the ages of the American and Japanese characters. The age distribution of American characters in Japanese commercials is greater than that of the Japanese characters in American commercials. American characters appeared in all age brackets with a concentration in the teens and twenties. The Japanese characters' ages ranged only from twenties through forties. The t test was applied to the comparison for the age distribution; the difference was statistically confirmed at $p < 0.025$ with a value of 2.36.[3]

Table 5 indicates role significance of American and Japanese characters. In Japanese commercials, 163 American characters (32%) appeared in major roles, 109 (21.5%) appeared in supporting roles, and 236 (46.5%) appeared in background roles. In American commercials, only one Japanese character (1.8%) had a major role and one (1.8%) had a supporting role. The remaining 55 (96%) appeared in background roles. The chi-square test indicated a significant difference in the significance of the roles of American and Japanese characters in each other's commercials (df = 2, $X = 52.79$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 6 shows the context in which the American and Japanese characters appeared. A sizeable proportion of each appeared in leisure activities: 69.1% of the American characters and 63.2% of the Japanese characters. But 83 (16.3%) of the American characters in Japanese commercials were models, whereas none of the Japanese characters in American commercials were seen in that role. Instead, 21 (36.8%) of the Japanese characters appeared in a working context, compared with 74 (14.6%) of the American characters in a work context. The chi-square test indicated a significant difference between the contexts in which American and Japanese characters were seen ($p < 0.001$).

Table 7 shows the nationality of the sponsors of the TV commercials. In Japan, 392 (77.4%) of the American characters

were presented by Japanese companies and 115 (22.6%) by American companies. In contrast, only seven Japanese characters (12.3%) were in commercials sponsored by American companies; the other 50 (87.7%) were in commercials presented by Japanese companies. The chi-square goodness of fit test indicated a significant difference in sponsorships between the two countries ($p < 0.001$).

Table 8 shows which products the American and Japanese characters advertised. More than half of the American characters appear in grocery commercials, whereas 87.7% of the Japanese characters are advertising automobiles or related parts.

Crosstabulations

Age distribution by character and role significance: The frequencies and the percentages of male and female characters in each age group in relation to role significance are shown in Table 9.

The first section of Table 9 shows the age distribution of the major role characters. American male characters were seen most frequently in their thirties (32.5%), whereas female characters were seen most frequently in their twenties (73.8%). Of the American males, 25.3% appeared to be over 50, whereas none of the American female characters did. There was only one Japanese character who played a major role, a male character in his thirties.

The second section of Table 9 represents the age distribution of the supporting role characters. American male characters were constantly seen in their thirties, forties or fifties, totalling over 20% in each age bracket. But the age distribution of female characters takes the form of a bell curve which peaks in the twenties (41.5%). In short, American male characters appeared older than the American female characters. There was only one female Japanese character in American commercials who played a minor role; she was in her thirties.

The third section of Table 9 represents the age distribution of background role characters. More than half (55.4%) of the American male characters playing background roles were in their teens. Most of the American female characters playing background roles were either in their teens (44.8%) or their twenties (38.8%). Japanese characters in background roles appeared most frequently to be in their twenties; this is true for all of the female characters and half the males, with the remaining half of the males appearing to be in the thirties and forties age brackets.

In summarizing these crosstabulations, the following three points are worth noting: 1) When American male characters either major or supporting roles, they were most likely to be middle-aged. 2) The age of the American female characters, especially of those who played major roles, showed a pronounced concentration in the twenties age bracket. 3) The age distribution of Japanese characters was less diverse than that of the American characters. This was especially true for the Japanese female characters.

Context by character sex and role significance:
The first section of Table 10 represents the contexts in which the major-role characters appeared. American characters of both sexes appeared most frequently in a leisure context.

The second section of Table 10 represents the contexts in which the supporting characters appeared. Again, a pronounced concentration of both sexes of American characters was seen in a leisure context.

The third section of Table 10 represents the contexts in which background characters appeared. There were 17 "sex-unidentified" characters who appeared in a work context; otherwise the distribution of American background characters according to age, sex and work or leisure activity was the same as that of the major characters. About half the male Japanese characters were seen at work, half were at leisure, and all the female Japanese characters were at leisure.

In summarizing these crosstabulations, three points are emphasized: 1) Whether they were major, supporting or background figures, male and female American characters appeared most frequently in a leisure context. 2) Following leisure, the major-role males appeared most frequently in a work context, whereas the major-role female characters were models. 3) When Japanese characters played a major or supporting role, they appeared in a work context.

Sponsors of the television commercials by character sex and role significance: Table 11 shows character sex and role significance, crosstabulated with the nationality of the company sponsoring the commercial.

The Japanese television commercials with American characters were mainly sponsored by Japanese companies. When American characters appeared, with the exception of females in background roles, they were cast by Japanese companies anywhere from 61.4% to 92.8% of the time. When Japanese characters played a major or supporting role, these commercials were presented by American companies. When Japanese characters appeared in background roles, 88.4% of the male and 100% of the female characters were cast by Japanese companies.

Advertised products by character sex and role significance: Table 12 shows the crosstabulations of the advertised products by the television characters in relation to their sex and role significance.

The first section of Table 12 represents the distribution of major role characters. American male characters advertised automobiles and related parts most frequently (30.1%) and sweets second most frequently (24.1%)

The second section of Table 12 shows the distribution of supporting role characters, most of whom advertised foods or alcoholic beverages.

The third section of Table 12 represents the distribution of background role characters. Half of the American male background characters advertised foods, and half of the females advertised

sweets. Japanese background characters were most visible in automobile and related parts commercials (88% of males and 100% of females).

In summarizing these crosstabulations, the following three points are worth noting: 1) With regard to American major-role characters, the males usually advertised automobiles and related parts, whereas the female characters advocated sweets and clothing. 2) American female characters advertised foods in general, regardless of their role significance. 3) Background-role Japanese characters in American commercials advertised automobiles and related parts.

Discussion of the Content Analysis

Clearly there is a great imbalance in the number of appearances of American and Japanese characters in the other country's TV commercials. Although 20% of the Japanese commercials used American characters, only 3.5% of American commercials used Japanese characters. Furthermore, nearly 60% of the American characters in Japanese commercials appeared in identifiable major or supporting roles, whereas Japanese characters in American commercials appeared in ambiguous or background roles in 96% of the cases. Thus the difference in treatment of American and Japanese characters cannot be denied.

The population of television characters reflects advertisers' ideas of what will sell. The main purpose of advertising lies in audience persuasion; television commercials must appeal to the audience. The imbalance in the proportion, then, suggests that Japanese are more concerned about American people, their lives and their culture, than Americans are concerned with Japanese.

To elaborate the characteristics of the portrayals in the commercials, the following discussion proceeds in terms of the five variables identified in the content analysis.

1) Sex of Characters

Male characters outnumbered female characters two to one among American characters and three to one for Japanese characters.

The findings of this study are comparable to those for American television drama: males appear almost three times more frequently than females in American television in general (16, p. 11; 37, 38).

2) Age

With regard to the age of American characters in Japanese commercials, three generalizations can be made. The first is, world-renowned middle-aged male characters appeared frequently: 38.2% of the major-role males were recognized throughout the world. Examples include Roger Moore, Woody Allen, Paul Newman and Sean Connery. They played prestigious roles; in fact, they could not play anything else but major roles because of their status. This tendency was greater for the males than for the females.

The second generalization is that many teen-age characters appeared in groups, playing. They enjoyed roller skating, baseball or being in playgrounds with friends. This explains why the teen-age characters were predominant in background roles.

The third generalization is that 41-74% of the American female characters appeared to be in their twenties, regardless of the role's significance. They appeared as attractive decorations. After studying American primetime drama, Gerbner et al. concluded that "women are most concentrated, with almost a third of their total number, in the 25 to 34 age bracket, and the character population is structured to provide a relative abundance of younger women for older men" (14, p. 40). This was also true for American female characters in Japanese commercials.

With regard to Japanese characters in American commercials, almost all the middle-aged Japanese male characters appeared as businessmen. They did not speak at all, and they appeared only as a part of the background. Because these commercials were sponsored by a Japanese automobile manufacturer and the characters were stereotyped, they were recognizable as Japanese. It should be noted, however, that there were some commercials of this type sponsored by American companies. Male and female Japanese

characters in their twenties appeared as happy young couples. Like the businessmen, they did not speak at all, and stayed in the background.

A less frequent Japanese stereotype was the waitress in a Japanese restaurant in Tokyo, wearing a kimono and serving an American male customer. The commercial suggested that the product was international; she was foreign but attractive to Americans.

3) Significance of Roles

The proportion of major and supporting roles was greater for American characters than for Japanese characters, whereas the proportion of background characters was greater for Japanese characters.

Clark has suggested that the evolution of minority groups in the mass media occurs in a distinct sequence (6). He identifies four states: 1) nonrecognition, or invisibility, 2) ridicule, 3) regulatory (such as police or detectives), and 4) egalitarian. If this theory applies to television commercials, it can be said that Japanese characters in American commercials are at the first stage, that is, nonrecognition or invisibility. They hardly appeared in commercials at all. When they did, they often appeared as background characters for only a few seconds.

American characters in Japanese commercials, on the other hand, were beyond the fourth stage, beyond egalitarian roles. Clark describes egalitarian roles as occurring when the characters develop broader dimensions and are not so differentiated from the roles given to majority ethnics (6). But American characters often appeared to have a higher socio-economic status than the majority group of Japanese characters in Japanese commercials. They enjoyed their lives or they often appeared as models to give pretigious images to the advertised products (9). Thus, American characters in Japanese commercials appeared to have actually transcended the egalitarian roles. These roles in which the characters develop higher status roles than majority

ethnics can be called "prestigious roles." Perhaps prestigious roles are a fifth stage of evolution, to be considered with Clark's first four stages. This should be considered in future research.

4) Context

American characters appeared in three contexts in Japanese commercials: work, leisure and as models. American characters were under-represented in work contexts and over-represented in leisure activities. They were also over-represented as models. This was especially true for the major-role female characters (40% of the total). The models were attractive, but did not speak in most of the commercials. Chestnut, Lachance and Lubitz concluded that "female characters play roles of the decorative or functionless models because their primary activity is to adorn the products as a sexual or attractive stimulus" (5, p. 11). Their contention is supported in this study.

5) Advertised Products

The products advertised by Japanese characters in American commercials directly reflect economic relationships between the U.S. and Japan. A large proportion, 87.7% of the Japanese characters, appeared in automobile and related parts commercials. These commercials were sponsored by a Japanese company. The rest of the Japanese characters pitched precision machines or appeared in financial or business commercials. It is worth noting that these products are items that have drawn public attention because trade friction between the U.S. and Japan due to an excess of Japanese exports to the U.S.

To summarize the content analysis, American characters 1) appeared much more frequently, 2) had a broader age distribution, 3) appeared to enjoy life more, and 4) advertised a wider variety of products than did Japanese characters.

Audience Impressions

For the second part of the study, which deals with audience impressions of the characters, volunteer raters consisted of two groups, Americans and Japanese. The first group, the Americans, were drawn from UCSB students; the total number was 38 (17 men; 21 women).

The second group, consisting of Japanese volunteer raters, was drawn from regular students at UCSB and students in the UCSB Extension. The total number of Japanese subjects was 25 (11 men and 14 women).

Procedure

Subjects were gathered in groups of four to fifteen. They were instructed in how to use a semantic differential scale, and told they were going to view Japanese and American commercials, although they were not informed of the purpose of this study. They were asked to arrive at clear impressions of the character as a person and check the rating sheet. After one practice coding using a sample commercial, they viewed randomly-ordered Japanese and American commercials and checked the rating sheet.

Measurement Instrument

Audience impression was measured in terms of socio-intellectual status and attractiveness. Audience impression of characters' socio-intellectual status was quantified by a dimension of the Speech Dialect Attitudinal Scale (SDAS): Socio-Intellectual Status. SDAS, a 12-item semantic differential, has demonstrated high reliability and high construct validity in previous studies (22, 24, 25, 26, 27). The items used in this study were: rich/poor, educated/uneducated, white collar/blue collar, high social status/low social status. A Japanese translation of the items above coupled with English was prepared for the Japanese subjects.

Audience impression of characters' attractiveness was quantified by a dimension of Attractiveness (4). The items of this dimension were made up of an Aesthetic dimension of the SDAS mentioned above, and an attractiveness of personality dimension (3). The items used to determine attractiveness were: sweet/sour, nice/awful, cold/warm, friendly/unfriendly, likeable/unlikeable. A Japanese translation of these items coupled with English was prepared for the Japanese subjects. Items on both the socio-intellectual and attractiveness scales were printed with alternating polarity.

Validity

To test construct validity, data for the American subjects and Japanese subjects were separately factor-analyzed using common-factor Varimax procedures. The analysis indicated that the American and Japanese subjects used the semantic differential scale in somewhat different ways. In the case of the American subjects, the analysis yielded a two-factor solution with primary loading ranging from 0.77 to 0.91 (see Appendix A). In the case of the Japanese subjects, the analysis indicated that primary loadings of two items, nice/awful and likeable/unlikeable, were not very high, 0.66 and 0.55 respectively. Primary loadings of the rest of the items were higher, however, ranging from 0.67 to 0.85 (see Appendix B). Therefore these two items were excluded from the data for the American subjects and Japanese subjects, and the data for the two groups were combined to run a final factor analysis. The results supported Mulac's and Bradac and Mulac's two-factor solution: Attractiveness and Socio-Intellectual Status (24, 25, 26, 4). Table 13 shows that the primary loadings ranged from 0.76 to 0.90. These two dimensions accounted for 78% of the item variance.

Reliability

The Ebel intra-class procedure was used to estimate reliability (8). First, two-dimension scores for attractiveness and socio-intellectual status were computed by summing item scores except for two items, nice/awful and likeable/unlikeable; these two items were not included, as is explained above. Then, the intra-class reliability estimates were computed. The reliability coefficient for socio-intellectual status was .99, and that for attractiveness was .97. The results indicated high agreement among the subjects.

Multivariate Analysis

A 2-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine whether two independent variables had overall effects on

the two factors (2 character nationalities X 2 rater nationalities). The variable of character nationality showed substantial effects on the two factors (Hotelling-Lawley Trace = 0.2154, approximate F = 66.57, df = 2/618, $p < 0.0001$). This indicated that there was a significant difference in audience impressions of portrayals of American characters in Japanese commercials and those of Japanese characters in American commercials. Another independent variable, rater nationality, also showed substantial effects (Hotelling-Lawley Trace = 0.646, approximate F = 19.96, df = 2/618, $p < 0.0001$). This indicated that American subjects and Japanese subjects had significantly different impressions of the characters in the commercials. There was no significant interaction between character nationality X rater nationality (Hotelling-Lawley Trace = 0.0076, approximate F = 2.36, df = 2/618, p = 0.0953). This would indicate that the difference in impressions of the two character nationalities (American characters in Japanese commercials and Japanese characters in American commercials) on American raters would be the same as the difference in impressions of the two character nationalities on Japanese raters. In the same way, a nonsignificant interaction would also indicate the difference between the raters' nationalities (American raters and Japanese raters) in impressions of American commercials which would be the same as the difference between the raters' nationalities in impressions of the Japanese commercials. Thus, univariate analysis for these two "main" effects, character nationality and rater nationality, was conducted.

Univariate Analysis

The findings of significant overall effects of two independent variables on audience impressions of the television commercial characters led to univariate analysis.

On attractiveness, the first dimension, Table 14 shows the F values of ratings for the country in which the commercial was made and the rater nationality. Significant main effects were found on both of the independent variables. This indicated that

on attractiveness 1) there was a significant difference in audience impressions of portrayals of American characters in Japanese television commercials and those of Japanese characters in American commercials, and 2) American raters had significantly different impressions of the characters from those of Japanese raters.

Table 15 shows the F values of the ratings on socio-intellectual status, the second dimension. Significant main effects were also found on both independent variables, thus indicating significant differences in audience impressions of the portrayals by character nationality country and by rater nationality.

First, on the attractiveness dimension, the mean rating of the American characters in Japanese television commercials was 15.95, whereas that of Japanese characters in American commercials was 14.50. The American characters in Japanese television commercials were rated significantly higher than the Japanese characters in American commercials. This indicated that the audience had the impression that American characters in Japanese commercials were sweeter; warmer, and more friendly than Japanese characters in American commercials.

Secondly, on the socio-intellectual status dimension, the American characters in Japanese commercials were also rated significantly higher than the Japanese characters in the American television commercials. The mean rating for American characters was 21.80, whereas that for Japanese was 16.63. That is, the audience had the impression that the American characters in Japanese commercials were more educated, more "white collar," and of a higher social status than the Japanese characters in American commercials.

These findings provide clear support for the two research hypotheses in this study.

Finally, the American subjects had the impression that all the characters in all the television commercials were more attractive and higher in socio-intellectual status than did the Japanese subjects.

It is said that Americans articulate their opinions, whereas Japanese are said to downplay emotions and opinions. This difference in national character could have led American raters to use the more extreme side of the semantic differential, giving higher scores than did the Japanese raters.

It is possible that interaction between character and rater nationality exists: rejecting a null hypothesis does not mean "proving" it (40). Taking statistical power into consideration, however, it is unlikely. Williams maintained that statistical power is gained from certain factors in the design of the experiment (such as sample size) and the kind of statistical models that are used for the calculation (40). First, the number of raters permits the statistical operation. Second, multivariate factorial design, MANOVA, is a powerful statistical design. Third, the measurement demonstrated sufficient sensitivity to find the main effects in the present study and in past research (25,26).

Thus, although there are great cultural differences between the U.S. and Japan, and although American raters gave higher ratings to all characters than did the Japanese raters, the pattern of higher ratings for American characters would be consistent and proportional for both groups of raters. The fact that Japanese and American raters' impressions of degrees of status and prestige were essentially identical despite conspicuous cultural differences could generate an entirely new set of research questions, and is a suggestion for further study.

Results of this study provide evidence that the audience receives the impression that American characters in Japanese commercials appear to be higher in socio-intellectual status and attractiveness than do Japanese characters in American commercials. Furthermore, American and Japanese audiences seem to receive similar impressions of these characters in terms of these two dimensions.

Conclusions

"The message systems of a culture not only inform but form common images."

--Gerbner, 1973 (11)

Throughout this study, emphasis has been placed on the content analysis and "immediate" effects of the portrayals of American and Japanese characters in commercials. Cultivation analysis by Gerbner et al. (12, 13, 14, 15) is a study of effects based on the longitudinal perspective. Gerbner approaches the effects with a hypothesis that "heavier viewers of television--those exposed to a greater degree than lighter viewers to its messages--are more likely to understand social reality in terms of the 'facts' they see on television" (12, p. 194). He continues to find evidence for associations between patterns of television content and viewers' conceptions of social reality. Though television is not the only agent of socialization, it cannot be denied that it is an important medium for learning about culture for most people, and embodies potential power to form viewers' pictures of the world, or Weltanschauung.

We live in an international age. An entire edition of Time Magazine (August 1, 1983) was devoted exclusively to Japan. It emphasized that the U.S. has the first, and Japan has the second most powerful economy in the free world. The partnership between us is not always in perfect harmony, however. The two countries, with different historical backgrounds, are suffering from economic and social problems, while they realize the importance of their partnerships. Time reported:

> A former Japanese ambassador to the United States, Nobuhiko Ushiba, said in April that he had "never seen the mood on Capitol Hill as ugly as it is now toward the Japanese." Unemployed Americans focus their anger upon the Japanese, ... In West Virginia, a charity raised money by selling a sledgehammer hits on a Toyota. A recession bumper sticker read: WHEN YOU BOUGHT YOUR JAPANESE CAR, 10 AMERICANS LOST THEIR JOBS. (35)

In this less than ideal situation, we hope that this study will contribute to better understanding between the U.S. and Japan. This study provides evidence that can serve for improved understanding between the two cultures, first with the content analysis on how Americans and Japanese are portrayed in commercials in each other's countries, and second with audience impressions of how American and Japanese viewers perceive themselves and each other in television commercials. The findings are important because television representation can have effects on viewers' attitudes and behavior.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Members of the UCSB faculty and staff who provided recorded commercials for this project were Anthony Mulac, James Lull, Francis Dauer, and Ken Hinton.

[2]The formula used was:

$$X = \sum_{i=1}^{r} \sum_{i=1}^{k} \frac{(Oij - Eij)^2}{Eij}$$

Oij = observed number of case categorized in ith row of jth column

Eij = number of cases expected under Ho to be categorized in ith row of jth columns

$\sum_{i=1}^{r} \sum_{j=1}^{k}$ directs one to sum over all (r) rows and all (k) columns i.e., to sum over all cells

[3]The formula used was:

$$t = \frac{M_I - M_{II}}{\sigma \text{ diff.}}$$

M_I and M_{II} are the sample means

σ diff. is the standard error of the difference between the means

Table 1

Samples of American Characters
in Japanese Television Commercials

Product Advertised	Sex	Age	Significance of Role	Context	Sponsor Nationality
Automobile	M	40	major	leisure	Japan
Sweets	M	20	major	leisure	Japan
Soft Drinks	F	30	major	leisure	U.S.A.
Soft Drinks	F	20	major	leisure	Japan
Alcoholic Beverage	M	50	major	leisure	Japan

Table 2

Samples of Japanese Characters
in American Television Commercials

Product Advertised	Sex	Age	Significance of Role	Context	Sponsor Nationality
Automobile	M	40	background	working	Japan
Banking	F	30	minor	working	U.S.A.
Banking	M	40	background	leisure	U.S.A.
Precision Machine	M	30	major	working	U.S.A.
Automobile Related Parts	M	50	major	working	U.S.A.

Table 3

Sex Composition of American and Japanese Characters

Nationality of Characters	Gender			
	male	female	(unidentified)	total
American Characters in Japanese Television	279 (54.9%)	212 (41.7%)	17 (3.4%)	508 (100%)
Japanese Characters in American Television	44 (77.2%)	13 (22.8%)	0 (0%)	57 (100%)

$X = 8.05$, df = 1, $p < 0.025$

Table 4

Age of American and Japanese Characters

Nationality of Characters	Age		
	-9	10-19	20-29
American Characters in Japanese Television	22 (4.5%)	150 (30.5%)	141 (28.7%)
Japanese Characters in American Television	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	31 (54.4%)
	30-39	40-49	50 -
American Characters in Japanese Television	88 (17.9%)	45 (9.2%)	45 (9.2%)
Japanese Characters in American Television	14 (24.6%)	12 (21.1%)	0 (0%)

*Coders were unable to identify the age of 17 American characters.

$t = 2.36$, $p < 0.025$

Table 5

Role Significance of American and Japanese Characters

Nationality of Characters	Role significance			
	major	supporting	background	total
American Characters in Japanese Television	163 (32.0%)	109 (21.5%)	236 (46.5%)	508 (100%)
Japanese Characters in American Television	1 (1.8%)	1 (1.8%)	55 (96.5%)	57 (100%)

$X = 52.79$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$

Table 6

Context in which American and Japanese Characters Appeared

Nationality of Characters	Context			
	working	leisure	model	total
American Characters in Japanese Television	74 (14.6%)	351 (69.1%)	83 (16.3%)	508 (100%)
Japanese Characters in American Television	21 (36.8%)	36 (63.2%)	0 (0%)	57 (100%)

$X = 24.72$, $df = 2$, $p < .001$

Table 7

Sponsors of the Television Commercials

Nationality of Characters	Sponsor Nationality		
	Domestic sponsors	Foreign sponsors	Total
American Characters in Japanese Television	393 (77.4%)	115 (22.6%)	508 (100%)
Japanese Characters in American Television	7 (12.3%)	50 (87.7%)	57 (100%)

$X = 104.95$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$

Table 8

Products Advertised by
American and Japanese Characters

Advertised Products	Nationality of Characters	
	American Characters in Japan	Japanese Characters in America
Medicine	18 (3.6%)	0 (0%)
Alcoholic beverage	36 (7.1%)	0 (0%)
Soft drinks	54 (10.6%)	0 (0%)
Sweets	95 (18.7%)	0 (0%)
Foods	113 (22.2%)	0 (0%)
Cosmetics	38 (7.5%)	0 (0%)
Miscellaneous-Household item I	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Household items II	4 (0.8%)	0 (0%)
Household appliances	2 (0.4%)	0 (0%)
Clothing	48 (9.4%)	0 (0%)
Music instruments	5 (1.0%)	0 (0%)
Automobiles and related parts	65 (12.8%)	50 (87.7%)
Precision machine	17 (3.3%)	1 (1.8%)
Entertainment	5 (1.0%)	0 (0%)
Banking, publications	8 (1.6%)	6 (10.5%)
Total	508 (100%)	57 (100%)

Table 9

Age Distribution by Character Sex and Role Significance

Group	Age 0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50 -
Major role						
American						
Males	3 (3.6%)	13 (15.7%)	12 (14.5%)	27 (32.5%)	7 (8.4%)	21 (25.3%)
Females	2 (2.5%)	8 (10.0%)	59 (73.8%)	7 (8.8%)	4 (5.0%)	0 (0%)
Japanese						
Males	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Females	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Supporting role						
American						
Males	2 (4.6%)	2 (4.6%)	6 (13.6%)	11 (25.0%)	9 (20.5%)	14 (31.8%)
Females	2 (3.1%)	12 (18.5%)	27 (41.5%)	18 (27.7%)	3 (4.6%)	3 (4.6%)
Japanese						
Males	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Females	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Background role						
American						
Males	10 (6.6%)	85 (55.4%)	11 (7.2%)	22 (14.5%)	17 (11.2%)	7 (4.6%)
Females	3 (4.5%)	30 (44.8%)	26 (38.8%)	3 (4.5%)	5 (7.5%)	0 (0%)
Japanese						
Males	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	19 (44.2%)	12 (27.9%)	12 (27.9%)	0 (0%)
Females	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	12 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 10

Context by Character Sex and Role Significance

Group	Context		
	Working	Leisure	Models
	Major role		
American			
Males	21 (25.3%)	59 (71.1%)	3 (3.6%)
Females	3 (3.8%)	45 (56.2%)	32 (40.0%)
Japanese			
Males	1 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Females	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	Supporting role		
American			
Males	2 (4.5%)	33 (75.0%)	9 (20.5%)
Females	8 (12.3%)	43 (66.2%)	14 (21.5%)
Japanese			
Males	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Females	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	Background role		
American			
Males	20 (13.2%)	116 (76.3%)	16 (10.5%)
Females	3 (4.5%)	55 (82.1%)	9 (13.4%)
Unidentified	17 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Japanese			
Males	19 (44.2%)	24 (55.8%)	0 (0%)
Females	0 (0%)	12 (100%)	0 (0%)

Table 11

Sponsor of the Television Commercials
by Character Sex and Role Significance

Group	Sponsor	
	Domestic sponsor	Foreign sponsor
	Major role	
American		
Males	61 (73.5%)	22 (26.5%)
Females	60 (75.0%)	20 (25.0%)
Japanese		
Males	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Females	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	Supporting role	
American		
Males	27 (61.4%)	17 (38.6%)
Females	55 (84.6%)	10 (15.4%)
Japanese		
Males	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Females	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
	Background role	
American		
Males	141 (92.8%)	11 (7.2%)
Females	32 (47.8%)	35 (52.2%)
Japanese		
Males	5 (11.6%)	38 (88.4%)
Females	0 (0%)	12 (100%)

Table 12

Advertised Products by Character Sex and Role Significance

Advertised Products	Nationality of Characters: American Males	American Females	American Un-identified	Japanese Males	Japanese Females	Japanese Un-identified
			Major role			
Medicine	1 (1.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Alcoholic beverage	2 (2.4%)	1 (1.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Soft drinks	9 (10.8%)	12 (15.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Sweets	20 (24.1%)	18 (22.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Foods	15 (18.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Cosmetics	1 (1.2%)	4 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Miscellaneous-Household Items I	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Household Items II	0 (0%)	2 (2.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Household appliances	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Clothing	4 (4.8%)	18 (22.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Music instruments	1 (1.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Automobiles and related parts	25 (30.1%)	11 (13.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Precision machine	3 (3.7%)	6 (7.4%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Entertainment	0 (0%)	1 (1.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Banking, publications	1 (1.2%)	6 (7.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Subtotal	83 (100%)	80 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 12 (cont.)

Advertised Products by Character Sex and Role Significance

Advertised Products	Nationality of Characters: American Males	American Females	American Un-identified	Japanese Males	Japanese Females	Japanese Un-identified
			Supporting role			
Medicine	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Alcoholic beverage	12 (27.3%)	9 (13.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Soft drinks	12 (27.3%)	2 (3.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Sweets	3 (6.8%)	3 (4.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Foods	1 (2.3%)	21 (32.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Cosmetics	0 (0%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Miscellaneous-Household Items I	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Household Items II	0 (0%)	2 (3.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Household appliances	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Clothing	10 (22.6%)	7 (10.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Music instruments	1 (2.3%)	3 (4.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Automobile and related parts	3 (6.8%)	9 (13.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Precision machine	1 (2.3%)	4 (6.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Entertainment	1 (2.3%)	3 (4.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Banking, publications	0 (0%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Subtotal	44 (100%)	65 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)

Table 12 (cont.)

Advertised Products by Character Sex and Role Significance

Advertised Products	Nationality of Characters: American Males	American Females	American Un-identified	Japanese Males	Japanese Females	Japanese Un-identified
			Background role			
Medicine	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	17 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Alcoholic beverage	4 (2.6%)	8 (11.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Soft drinks	14 (9.2%)	5 (7.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Sweets	14 (9.2%)	37 (55.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Foods	76 (50.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Cosmetics	25 (16.5%)	7 (10.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Miscellaneous-Household Items I	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Household Items II	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Household appliances	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Clothing	8 (5.3%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Music instruments	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Automobile and related parts	11 (7.2%)	6 (9.0%)	0 (0%)	38 (88.4%)	12 (100%)	0 (0%)
Precision machine	0 (0%)	3 (4.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Entertainment	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Banking, publications	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (11.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Subtotal	152 (100%)	67 (100%)	17 (100%)	43 (100%)	12 (100%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL	279	212	17	44	13	0

Table 13

Factor Analysis for Audience Impressions

Item	Rotated Factor Pattern	
	Factor 1	Factor 2
Sweet/Sour	0.05	0.78
Cold/Warm	0.04	0.90
Friendly/Unfriendly	0.08	0.76
Rich/Poor	0.84	0.06
Educated/Uneducated	0.80	0.11
White Collar/Blue Collar	0.84	-0.02
High Social Status/Low Social Status	0.90	0.08

Table 14

Univariate Analysis for Attractiveness Dimension

Source	SS	df	F value	probability > F
Character nationality	619.23	1	41.45	0.0001
Rater nationality	211.26	1	14.14	0.0002

Table 15

Univariate Analysis for Socio-Intellectual Status Dimension

Source	SS	df	F value	probability > F
Character nationality	2336.25	1	97.07	0.0001
Rater nationality	660.44	1	27.44	0.0001

APPENDIX A

Factor Analysis
for American Audience Impressions

Item	Related factor pattern	
	Factor 1	Factor 2
Sweet/Sour	0.83	-0.01
Nice/Awful	0.90	0.02
Cold/Warm	0.86	0.02
Friendly/Unfriendly	0.85	0.04
Likeable/Unlikeable	0.77	0.04
Rich/Poor	0.01	0.89
Educated/Uneducated	0.10	0.80
White Collar/Blue Collar	-0.06	0.87
High Social Status/Low Social Status	0.05	0.91

APPENDIX B

Factor Analysis
for Japanese Audience Impressions

	Related factor pattern	
	Factor 1	Factor 2
Sweet/Sour	0.08	0.78
Nice/Awful	0.54	0.66
Cold/Warm	0.03	0.81
Friendly/Unfriendly	0.10	0.67
Likeable/Unlikeable	0.60	0.55
Rich/Poor	0.76	0.14
Educated/Uneducated	0.82	0.14
White Collar/Blue Collar	0.78	0.02
High Social Status/Low Social Status	0.85	0.11

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